

## **Did you know that people with serious mental illness are dying 10-25 years earlier than everyone else?**

According to a 2006 technical report from the National Association of State Mental Health Directors ([www.nasmhpd.org](http://www.nasmhpd.org)) and other new research, poor health habits, smoking, and medication side effects may cause early illness and death in people with serious mental illness. The NH Bureau of Behavioral Health encourages consumers, families, and mental health care providers to pay attention to physical and mental health.

**YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH AND YOUR MENTAL HEALTH ARE BOTH IMPORTANT** New research shows that many people with serious mental illness are having problems with their health, including obesity (overweight) and diabetes (high blood sugar). These health problems can lead to serious illness such as heart disease and early death. Eating healthy and exercising regularly makes a big difference to your health and can prevent both heart disease and early death. *Talk to health care providers about ways to get healthy!*

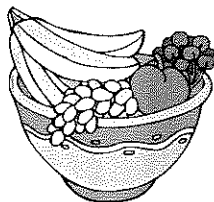
**YOU CAN STOP SMOKING** Smoking causes lung disease, heart disease and cancer. Medication and support groups help people quit smoking. You can quit too! Ask your doctor for help or call the quit line 1-800-TRY-TOSTOP. *Make a plan for what to do to avoid smoking when you have the urge! Help a friend to quit with you!*

**ARE YOU AWARE OF POSSIBLE MEDICATION SIDE EFFECTS?** Medications are an important part of treatment for many people. You should tell your prescriber how you want medicine to help you and discuss the pros and cons of different medicines. Your doctor will give you information about how medicines work and their possible side effects.

**Any medicine can have side effects**, although many people take medicine and do not have any side effects at all. Some medications can cause side effects that hurt your physical health. Weight gain, high blood sugar, and high blood fats (cholesterol and triglycerides) can happen to some people with some medicines. These side effects can lead to serious illness such as diabetes and heart disease. Talk with your doctor about potential side effects of your medicines. *Doctors and nurses should regularly check your weight, the size of your waist, your blood pressure, and the sugar (glucose) and fat (cholesterol and triglycerides) in your blood regularly to make sure they know if these side effects are happening.*

**USING MORE MEDICINE IS NOT ALWAYS BETTER.** Talk with your doctor about whether you need all the medications you are taking. *You may be able to use fewer medications and still manage your mental illness well.*

**YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH ARE BOTH IMPORTANT** We hope you will think about what you can do to take care of yourself. *Talk with your health care providers and take some of the steps to improve your health and live longer!*



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*The Department of Health and Human Services' Mission is to join communities and families in providing opportunities for citizens to achieve health and independence.*